



YOU COULD BE IN THE SUPERMAN MOVIE

--DETAILS INSIDE--

35¢
NO. 82
SEPT.
30453

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

GUEST
Starring:

SWAMP
THING

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

THIS
MONSTER'S
CONSUMING
PROF'S BODY--

--AND
USING IT TO
KILL US!

NASSER
FRUBINSTEIN



FOUR MEN WHO LIVE ON *BORROWED TIME*, WHO
DEVOTE THEIR LIVES TO THE *STRANGE*, WHO
EXPLORE WHERE NO OTHER MEN *DARE TO GO*--

FOUR MEN WHO ARE--

I TOLD YOU PROF
WAS DYING, BUT
NO-- YOU WOULDN'T
LISTEN.

SHUT UP,
CLAYBURNE. IF
ROCKY DOESN'T
HIT YOU-- I WILL!

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

THE PLACE: CHALLENGER
MOUNTAIN!
THE TIME: TODAY!
THE MISSION: URGENT!

NO ARGUMENTS! WE'VE
WASTED ENOUGH TIME
GETTING INTO THESE NEW
PROTECTIVE UNIFORMS!

CHALLENGER
1

THE LURKER BELOW

A JOURNEY INTO THE UNIMAGINABLE, WITH:

GERRY CONWAY, WRITER & MIKE NASSER, PENCILLER, JOE RUBINSTEIN, INKER

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WHEN I DISCOVERED PROF'S MEDICAL REPORT THIS AFTERNOON, I RAN HIS SYMPTOMS THROUGH YOUR COMPUTER--

--AND IT GAVE ME THE NAME OF THE ONE MAN WHO CAN SAVE PROF'S LIFE!

RECAP OF LAST ISSUE--JOH



OF COURSE, IF YOU DON'T WANT IT--

CLAYBURNE, DON'T TEMPT ME!

RIGHT NOW, THERE'S NOTHING I'D RATHER DO THAN PUNCH IN YOUR FACE--



--BUT LIKE YOU SAID, THERE'S A MAN DYING--

--AND LUCKILY FOR NOW, I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR GAMES.

YOU PLAYED THAT CLOSE, RED. ANOTHER MOMENT, AND WE'D BE LONG GONE!

JUST STUFF IT AND PULL ME ABOARD, ROCKY.

CLAYBURNE HAS DONE WONDER FOR MY MOOD.

ARROGANT SLOWN...



HE AND THE OTHER CHALLENGERS GIVE ME A ROYAL PAIN.

ALL I WANT TO DO IS JOIN THEIR PRECIOUS GROUP... AND ALL THEY EVER DO IS GIVE ME THE RUNAROUND.

WELL, NOT ANYMORE. WHEN I'M THROUGH WITH THEM, THEY'LL BEG ME TO JOIN THEM--



--AND WE'LL JUST SEE WHO LAUGHS AT WHOM THEN! "

ACCORDING TO THIS COMPUTER CARD, WE WANT A DOCTOR NAMED HEATHCLEFT MONROE--

--IN THE PENNSYLVANIA TOWN CALLED PERDITION.

PENNSYLVANIA? WHAT'S WITH THE COMPUTER? THE FIRST READ-OUT SAID MASSACHUSETTS!

SO THE COMPUTER'S GOT A BUS--WE'VE GOT OUR COURSE STRAIGHT NOW--AND I'M MOVING THIS CRATE!

THEY ARE FRIENDS, THESE FOUR MEN--BUT TIES MORE MEANINGFUL THAN FRIENDSHIP ALONE BIND THEM TOGETHER:

TOGETHER, THEY HAVE SURVIVED A THOUSAND DANGERS:

RED RYAN, CIRCUS DAREDEVIL,
MOUNTAIN CLIMBER EXTRAORDINAIRE,
AMATEUR ELECTRONIC GENIUS...

ROCKY DAVIS, ONETIME WRESTLING
CHAMPION, NOW A CHAMPION CHALLENGER
OF THE UNKNOWN--PERHAPS PROF
HALEY'S CLOSEST COMPANION...

PROF. HALEY
SCIENTIST AND DEEPSEA
EXPLORER...

AND ACE MORGAN, JET PILOT
AND ASTRONAUT, LEADER OF
THE GROUP...AND ONE OF THE
EIGHT MEN WHO HAVE SET FOOT
UPON THE MOON...

TOGETHER, THESE FOUR MEN PROBE THE FARTHEST REACHES OF KNOWLEDGE--TO THE BRINK OF INFINITY!

TODAY, THEY APPROACH
THOSE FAR REACHES
HERE IN THE APPARENTLY
QUIET PENNSYLVANIA
TOWN CALLED
PERDITION...



ACE, THIS PLACE SEEMS
SO--SO BACKWARD--SO
UNTOUCHED! DO YOU REALLY
BELIEVE THERE'S A MAN HERE
WHO CAN CURE PROF?

THAT'S WHAT
THE COMPUTER
TELLS US,
JUNE...

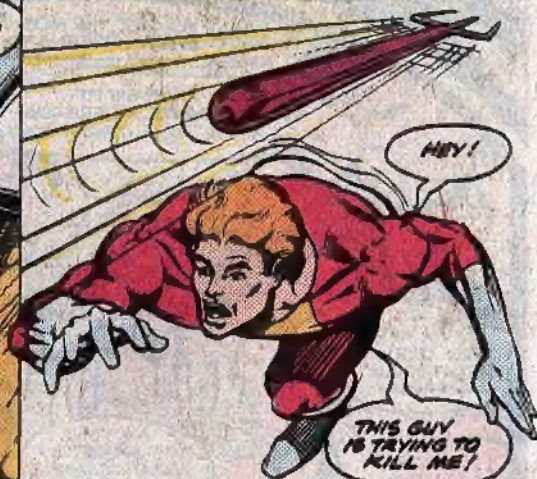
...AND RIGHT NOW,
WE'VE NOWHERE
ELSE TO GO!

-- BUT, BEFORE HE CAN SPEAK --

UH, ACE, I
DON'T LIKE THE
WAY THOSE TOWNPEOPLE
ARE LOOKING AT US...

IT'S SPOOKY
...WEIRD...

ACE MORGAN BEGINS
TO FRAME AN ANSWER...



HEY!

THIS GUY
IS TRYING TO
KILL ME!

LIKE AN ANGRY *TIDE*, THE TOWN-
FOLK SURGE OVER THE TWO
STARTLED CHALLENGERS--

--ATTACKING WITH WEAPONS
MORE SUITED TO *FARMING* THAN
WAR--

--BUT FOR ALL OF THAT,
NO LESS *DEADLY!*

AND THOUGH *RED RYAN* AND *ACE
MORGAN* FIGHT BACK WITH ALL THE
SKILL AND STRENGTH AT THEIR
COMMAND--

--THE SUDDEN BATTLE IS
CLEARLY *ONE-SIDED*--



--AND SHEER WEIGHT OF *NUMBERS* FORCE THE TWO
MEN *DOWN*--



AND *DOWN*--

--UNTIL
ABRUPTLY--

HOLD!

*HOLD,
I SAY!*

THE GRAVELLY
VOICE CUTS LIKE
A *BLADE* THROUGH
THE MOB'S INEXPLI-
CABLE *ANGER*--

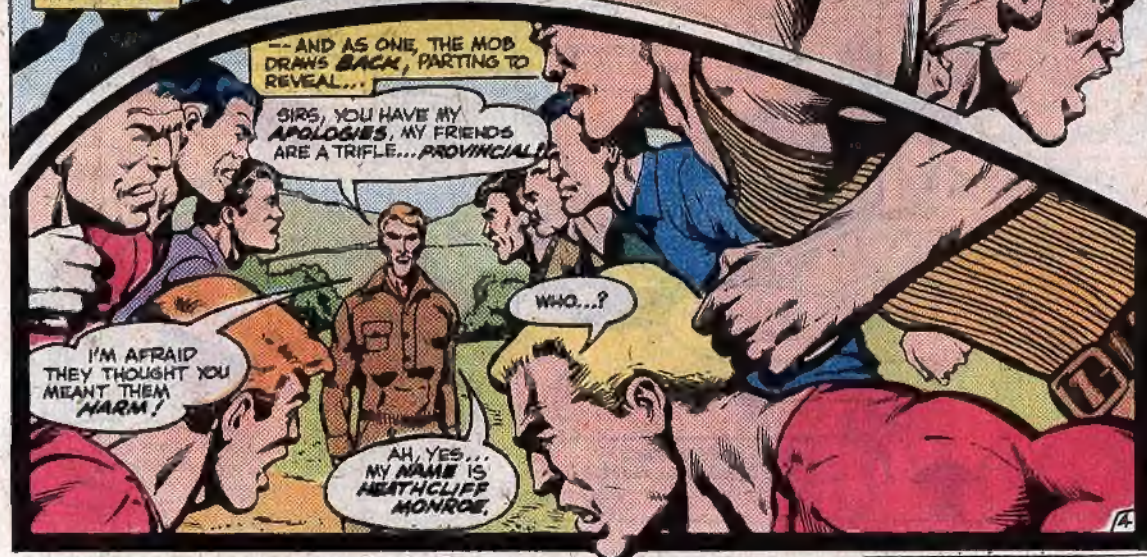
--AND AS ONE, THE MOB
DRAWS *BACK*, PARTING TO
REVEAL...

SIRS, YOU HAVE MY
APOLOGIES, MY FRIENDS
ARE A TRIFLE...*PROVINCIAL!*

WHO...?

I'M AFRAID
THEY THOUGHT YOU
MEANT THEM
HARM!

AH, YES...
MY NAME IS
*HEATHCLIFF
MONROE.*



CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

LEGACY OF THE DAMNED

ORIGINAL

2

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO EXPLAIN THE REASON FOR THEIR VISIT, AND SO, WITHIN THE HOUR, THE CHALLENGERS FIND THEMSELVES IN THE PRIVATE SURGERY OF DOCTOR HEATHCLIFF MONROE...

WHAT'S THE SCORE DOC? IS PROF GONNA MAKE IT, OR IS HE...

I MEAN, THAT IS...

YOU CAN SAY IT, ROCKY. IS PROF GOING TO DIE?

IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY, MISS ROBBINS. THE INFECTION IS WIDE-SPREAD...

HERE, SEE FOR YOURSELF...

OH, DEAR GOD!

--NO WARNIN' NO NOTHIN'?

I'M SORRY, MR. DAVIS... BUT YOU CAN SEE, THE FUNGUS COVERS MOST OF MR. HALEY'S UPPER TORSO.

SOMETHING LIKE THIS... MAKES PROGNOSIS UNRELIABLE...

CRIPES, DOC--THAT--THAT GROWTH WASN'T THERE A FEW HOURS AGO WHEN WE CHANGED HIS SHIRT! HOW'D IT SPRING UP--?

PLEASE, ROCKY--I CAN'T STAND TO SEE PROF THAT WAY.

I GOTCHA, KID, C'MON... LET'S TAKE A WALK...



DOCTOR MONROE, I'VE SEEN SOME HORRIBLE THINGS IN MY LIFE... BUT THIS...

WHAT IS IT?

IN A WAY, MR. RYAN... IN A WAY, PROFESSOR HALEY'S CONDITION REMINDS MY FRIENDS OF A TRAGEDY WE EXPERIENCED NOT SO LONG AGO...

BUT-- THEY DIDN'T EVEN SEE PROF! HOW COULD--

THEY CAN *SENSE* THE DISEASE, MR. MORGAN. AND IF YOU CARE TO KNOW WHY...

YEAH, AND THOSE TOWNFOLK... WHY DID THEY ATTACK US?

BECAUSE OF PROF...?

"...THEN LISTEN: ALMOST SEVENTY YEARS AGO, A MAN NAMED ABRAHAM TRIED TO SAVE PERDITION'S FAILING MINES BY SUMMONING AN OCCULT FORCE...

"UNFORTUNATELY, THOUGH HE KNEW ENOUGH TO CALL A DEMON FROM HELL--

"--HE WAS TOO REFRAGANT TO CONTROL IT--AND THE DEMON CONSUMED HIM, BODY AND SOUL--AND THEN REACHED OUT, TAKING COMMAND OF PERDITION--

"--FORCING THE TOWNFOLK TO PROVIDE FOOD FOR ITS GROWING MASS, ALLOWING IT TO BECOME LARGER--AND MORE POWERFUL--WITH EACH PASSING YEAR.

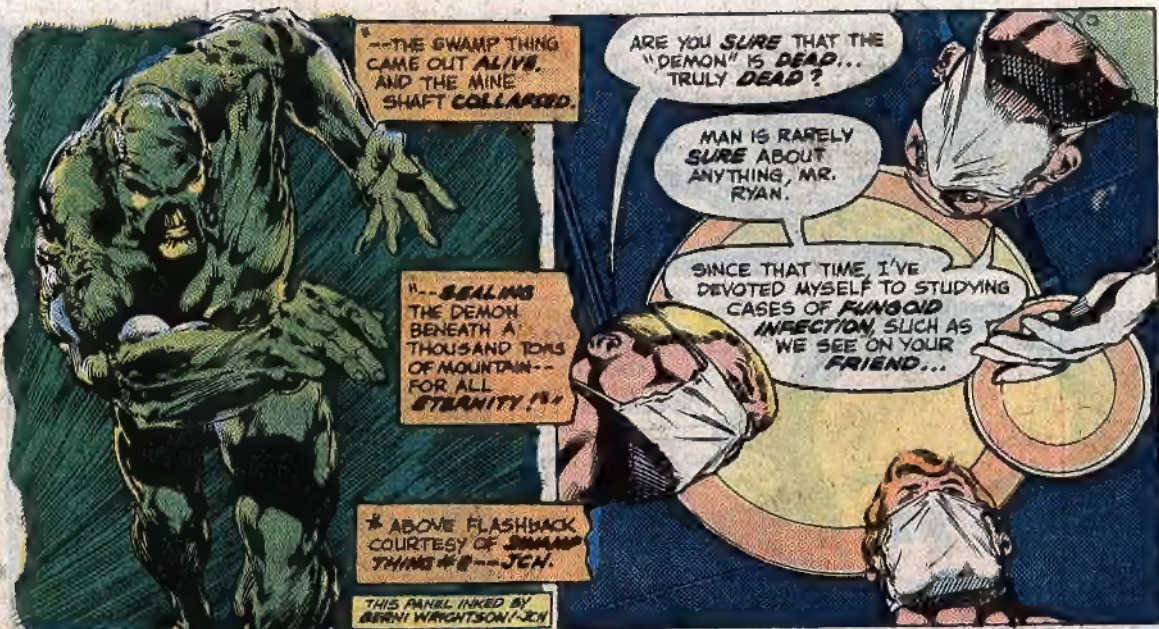
"--UNTIL, ONE DAY, A NEW MONSTER ENTERED THE TOWN, A SHAMBLING MCKEY OF A MAN, A THING OF MOSS AND SLIME--

"THE TOWNFOLK SENT IT TO FACE THE DEMON--

"FOR SEVENTY YEARS, THE NIGHTMARE CONTINUED. THE INHABITANTS WERE HELPLESS TO BREAK THE CREATURE'S HOLD--

"--WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A SHAMP THING.

"--AND THEY FOUGHT. WHAT HAPPENED IN THAT SHADOWED MINE, WE MAY NEVER KNOW, BUT WE DO KNOW THIS--



--THE SWAMP THING
CAME OUT ALIVE,
AND THE MINE
SHAFT COLLAPSED.

--SEALING
THE DEMON
BENEATH A
THOUSAND TONS
OF MOUNTAIN--
FOR ALL
ETERNITY!!

* ABOVE FLASHBACK
COURTESY OF *SWAMP
THING* #8--JEN.

THIS PANEL INKED BY
BERRI WRIGHTSON/JEN

ARE YOU *SURE* THAT THE
"DEMON" IS DEAD...
TRULY DEAD?

MAN IS RARELY
SURE ABOUT
ANYTHING, MR.
RYAN.

SINCE THAT TIME, I'VE
DEVOTED MYSELF TO STUDYING
CASES OF *FUNGOID*
INFECTION, SUCH AS
WE SEE ON YOUR
FRIEND...

I'VE BEEN
MODERATELY
SUCCESSFUL,
AND HAVE
ACHIEVED A
SMALL AMOUNT
OF *FAME*!

BUT, TO CURE,
A CASE AS
ADVANCED AS
PROFESSOR
HA'LEY'S...

I'LL REQUIRE CERTAIN *EQUIPMENT*,
AVAILABLE IN ONLY *ONE PLACE*...
THE DICTATORSHIP OF *BOROTAVIA*.

IF IT CAN BE *GOTTEN*, WE'LL GET
IT, DOCTOR. IN THE MEANTIME--

--PLEASE DO WHAT YOU
CAN.

BUT OF
COURSE, MR. MORGAN.

I SHALL DO
EVERYTHING...
POSSIBLE.

THERE'S A *RAW EDGE*
IN THE DOCTOR'S COMMENT--

-- BUT THE CHALLENGERS ARE TOO
Distracted TO CATCH THE SOFT
UNDERTONE OF *Menace*, AND SO...

ROCKY, JUNE... WE'RE GOING TO
BE *GONE* FOR A FEW HOURS,
PICKING UP SOME *MEDICAL*
EQUIPMENT FOR DOCTOR
MONROE.

CONTACT US IF
THERE'S ANY CHANGE--
OKAY?

SURE...OF
COURSE.

ROCKY, DO YOU
GET THE FEELING
THAT SOMETHING'S
WRONG WITH THIS
TOWN... *VERY*
WRONG?

LITTLE LADY, YOU
TOOK THE WORDS RIGHT
OUTA MY MOUTH.

JUNE ROBBINS *SAVING* AWARE
OF EYES WATCHING HER FROM
BEHIND HALF-SHUTTERED *Windows*--

--BUT IF SHE COULD SEE
THE *SHADOWS* BEHIND THE
EYES, SHE'D DO FAR MORE
THAN SHIVER--SHE MIGHT
EVEN *SCREAM*!



TWO OF THE OUTSIDERS HAVE LEFT. THE OTHERS ARE RE-ENTERING THE HOUSE OF HEATHCLIFF MONROE.

IT APPEARS SAFE. WE MAY BEGIN.

PLEASE... PLEASE YOU GUYS... A JOKE'S A JOKE...

...BUT HASN'T THIS GONE FAR ENOUGH, HUH, FELLAS? I MEAN, I ONLY CAME TO YOUR TOWN TO SELL TRACTORS...

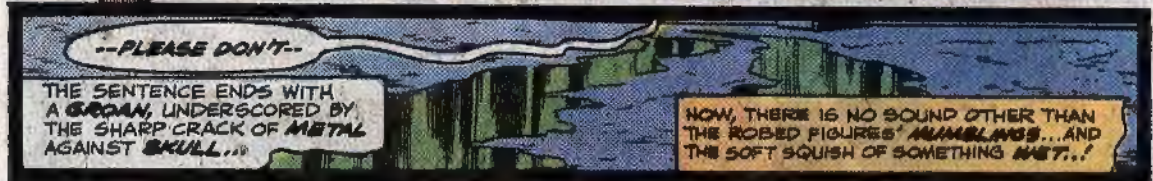
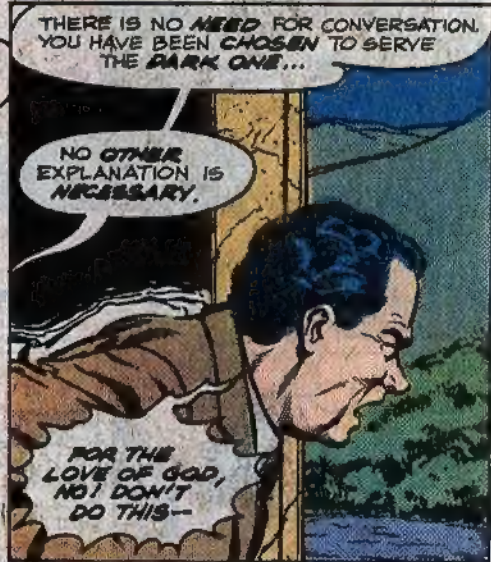
...AND THAT'S NOT A CRIME, IS IT? IS IT?

FOR GOD'S SAKE, WON'T ONE OF YOU GUYS ANSWER ME? PLEASE... JUST ANSWER ME!

THERE IS NO NEED FOR CONVERSATION. YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO SERVE THE DARK ONE...

NO OTHER EXPLANATION IS NECESSARY.

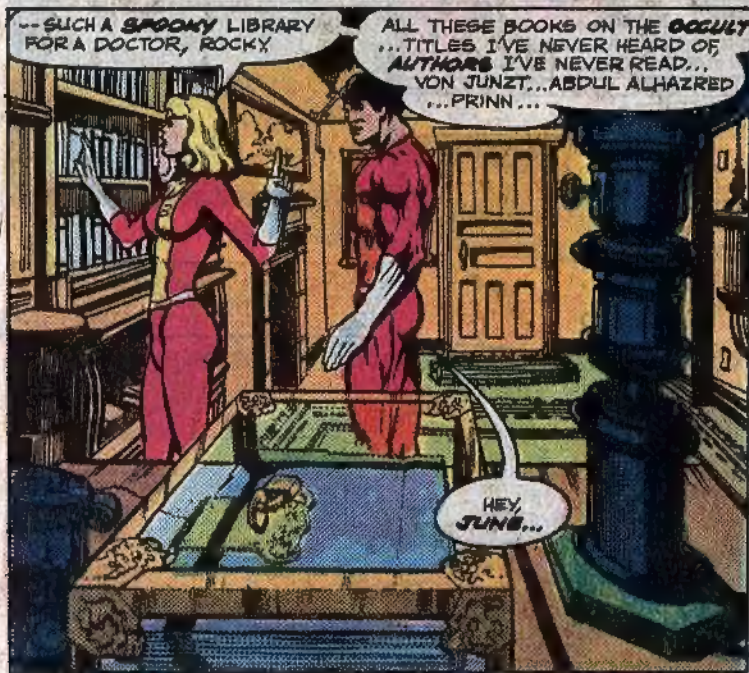
FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, NO! DON'T DO THIS--



--PLEASE DON'T--

THE SENTENCE ENDS WITH A GIGAN, UNDERSCORED BY THE SHARP CRACK OF METAL AGAINST SKULL...

NOW, THERE IS NO SOUND OTHER THAN THE ROBED FIGURES' MUMBLINGS... AND THE SOFT SQUISH OF SOMETHING MEAT...



--SUCH A SPADNY LIBRARY FOR A DOCTOR, ROCKY.

ALL THESE BOOKS ON THE OCCULT... TITLES I'VE NEVER HEARD OF. AUTHORS I'VE NEVER READ... VON JUNZT... ABDUL ALHAZRED... PRINN...

HEY, JUNE...



...TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

WHAT IS IT, ROCKY? AN OLD BIBLE?

UH-UH, LADY. GLOMM THE TITLE...

ROCKY, I DON'T LIKE THIS...

THE AUTHOR'S LAST NAME...IT'S THE SAME AS DOCTOR MONROES. AND SOMETHING TELLS ME THIS BOOK ~~ISN'T~~ AN OBSCURE MEDICAL TEXT...

VISIONS OF A DEAD PRIEST
MALCOMB MONROE
PHYSICIAN TO THE COURT OF HENRY II

IT SIMPLY REEKS OF SOMETHING OLD... AND EVIL...

KID, YOU'RE RIGHT. MAYBE WE SHOULD GRAB PROF AND SPLIT THIS BERG BEFORE--

YAAAAAAAH

SCREAMS! ROCKY-- SOMEONE'S IN TROUBLE!

AAAAAAAH!!

IT'S COMIN' FROM THAT CHURCH!

ROCKY, THOSE CRIES-- LIKE SOMEONE DYING!

HURRY, ROCKY! PLEASE, HURRY--!

CHAPTER 3 THE SOUL PREDATOR

ABRUPTLY, JUNE ROBBINS **BREAKS OFF**, HER VOICE DYING IN HER THROAT...

ROCKY DAVIS IS **EQUALLY STUNNED**, HIS MIND MOMENTARILY UNABLE TO GRASP WHAT THEY SEE...HIS VERY **SOUL** REBELLING AT THE HORROR...

EEEEEEEEEE

JUNE IS THE **FIRST** TO RECOVER, AND NOW SHE DOES WHAT SHE HADN'T DONE BEFORE...

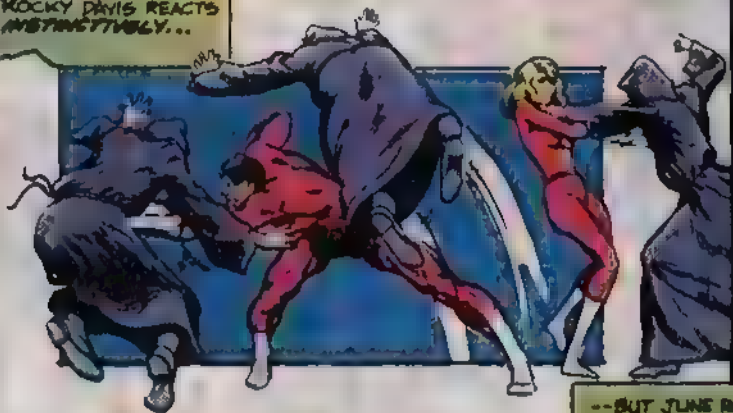
SHE SCREAMS!

ALMOST AS THOUGH THE SCREAM WERE A SIGNAL, THE ROBED TOWNSFOLK SPIN ABOUT--



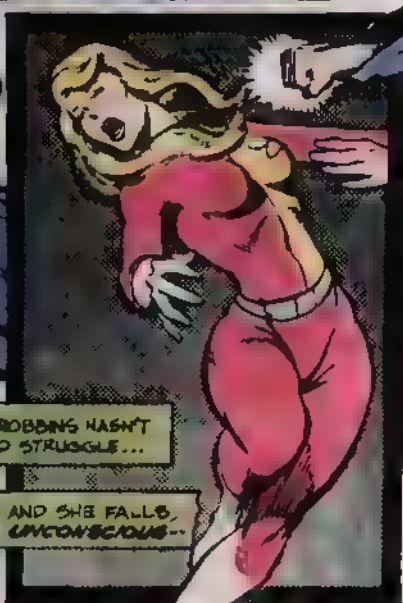
--WITH CRIES OF RAGE MORE ANIMAL THAN HUMAN, MORE FRIGHTENING THAN FRIGHTENED!

ROCKY DAVIS REACTS INSTINCTIVELY...



--BUT JUNE ROBBING HASN'T A CHANCE TO STRUGGLE...

AND SHE FALLS UNCONSCIOUS--



--AND STILL, ROCKY FIGHTS ON, SOMEHOW AWARE THAT THIS IS MORE THAN JUST A BATTLE FOR HIS LIFE--

--IT MAY WELL BE A STRUGGLE FOR HIS SOUL!

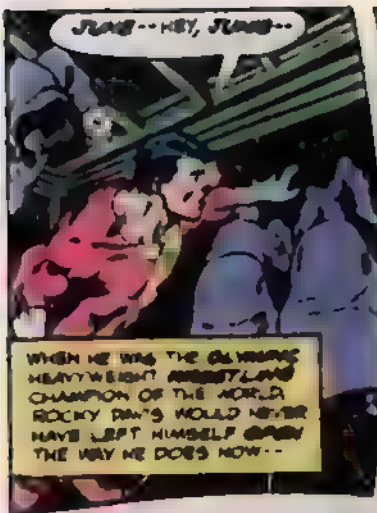


UNNNH... YOUR FACE...

...YOU'RE EVEN UGLIER THAN RAYAN!

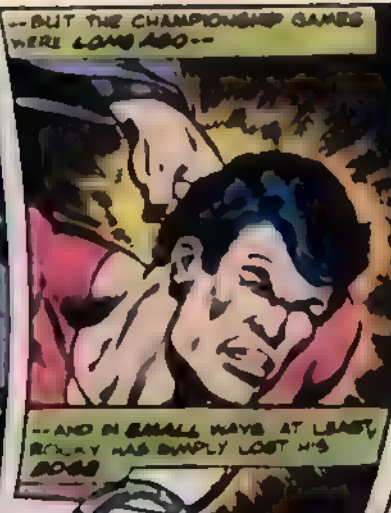
LIGHT BANTER, SPOKEN TO OFF-SET A WAVE OF REVULSION... IT ALMOST SUCCEEDED, BRINGING ROCKY A MOMENT'S RELIEF... BUT THEN...





JUNG--HEY, JUNG--

WHEN HE WAS THE OLYMPIC HEAVYWEIGHT ~~WRESTLING~~ CHAMPION OF THE WORLD, ROCKY DIAZ WOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT HIMSELF ~~DOWN~~ THE WAY HE DOES NOW--



--BUT THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES WERE LONG AGO--

--AND IN SMALL WAYS, AT LEAST, ROCKY HAS SIMPLY LOST HIS ~~BOSS~~



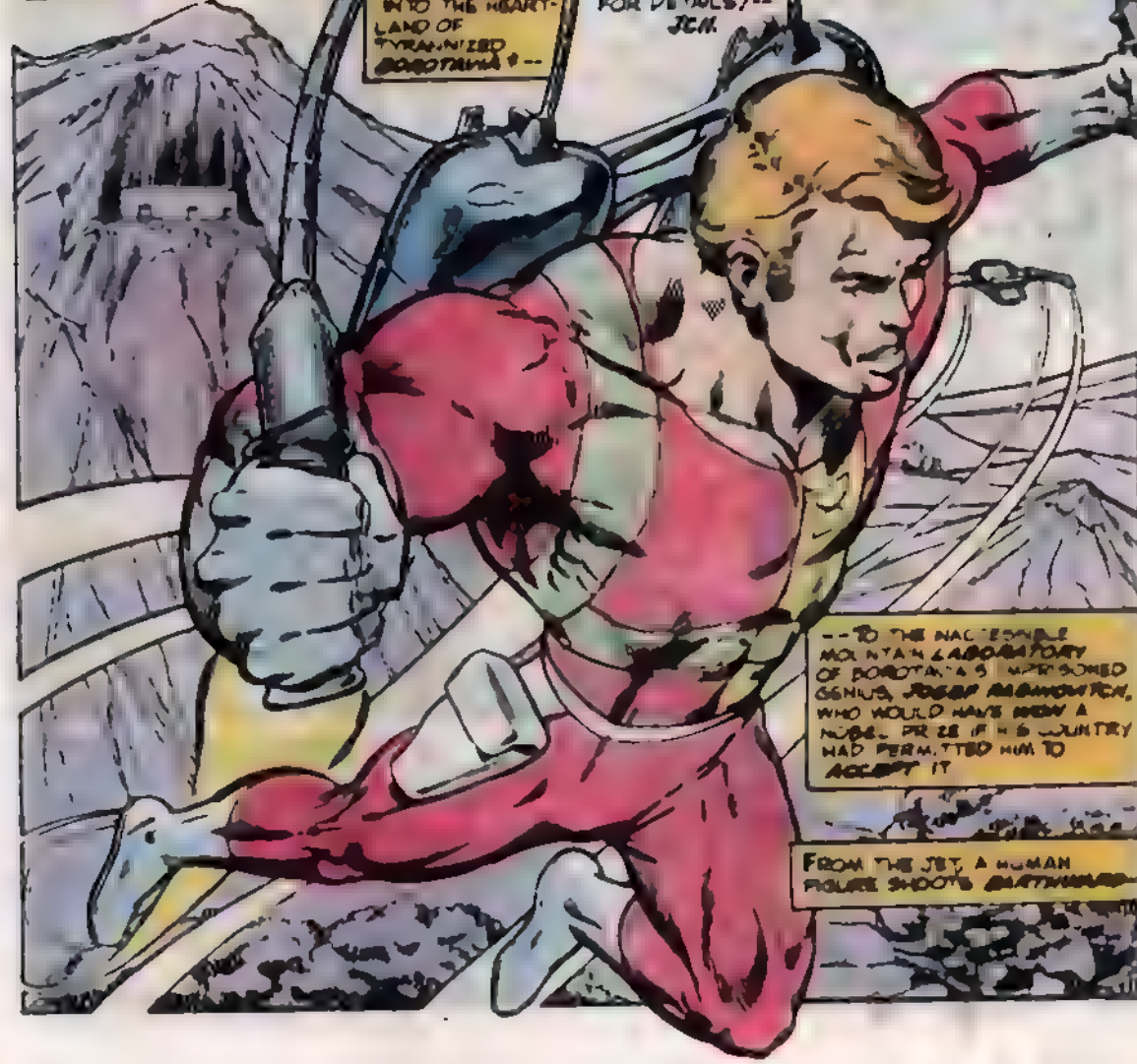
THE VERY LAST THING HE REMEMBERS BEFORE UNCONSCIOUSNESS WASHES HIM DOWN IS THE SOUND OF SOMETHING ~~BEING~~ MOVING ACROSS SOMETHING ~~ELSE~~

ELSEWHERE, TWO OTHER CHALLENGERS COMPLETE A SUPER-SONIC TRANS-ATLANTIC JOURNEY, AND NOW APPROACH THE LAST ~~LEG~~ OF THEIR TRIP--

--BRINGING THEM DEEP INTO THE HEART-LAND OF TYRANNIZED BORTANIA--

* SEE ACTION COMICS # 667 FOR DETAILS!-- JCH

...AND THE LAST PITABLE MOVER OF A TORTURED MAN ~~BARBARIC~~...

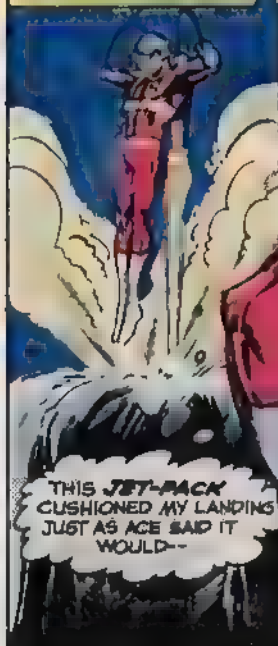


--TO THE NAUENHOLE MOUNTAIN LABORATORY OF BORTANIA'S IMPRISONED GENIUS, JOSEF ARAMONTCH, WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN A NOBEL PRIZE IF HIS COUNTRY HAD PERMITTED HIM TO ACCEPT IT

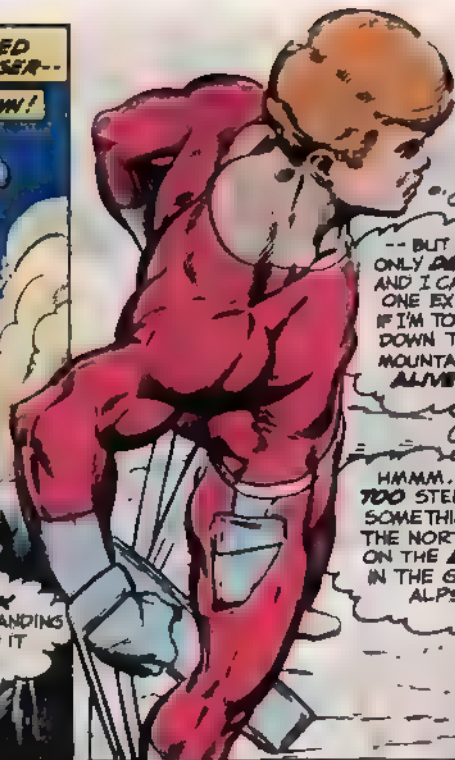
FROM THE JET, A HUMAN FIGURE SHOOTS ~~BARBARIC~~

--A MAN NAMED **RED RYAN**, A CHALLENGER--

--OF THE **UNKNOWN!**



THIS **JET-PACK** CUSHIONED MY LANDINGS JUST AS **ACE** SAID IT WOULD--



-- BUT NOW IT'S ONLY **DEAD WEIGHT**, AND I CAN'T AFFORD ONE **EXTRA OUNCE** IF I'M TO MAKE IT DOWN THE MOUNTAINSIDE **ALIVE**.

HMMM... NOT **TOO STEEP** SOMETHING LIKE THE **NORTH SLOPE** ON THE **EVER** IN THE **GERMAN ALPS**...

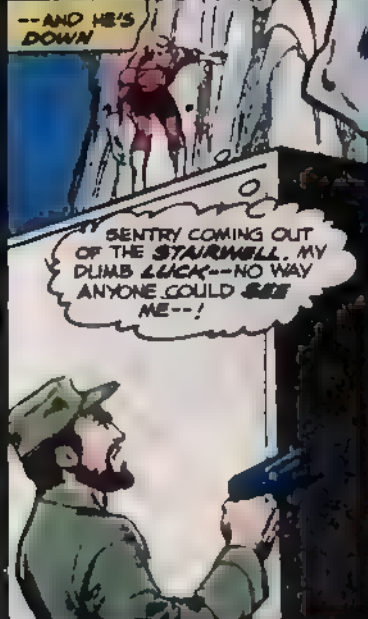
PITON BY PITON, **RED** MAKES HIS WAY DOWN THE MOUNTAIN FACE, ONLY **MARGINALLY** AWARE OF THE WIND TEARING HIS BACK--

--HIS WHOLE **BEING** FOCUSED ON THE ROCK BENEATH HIS HANDS AND FEET.

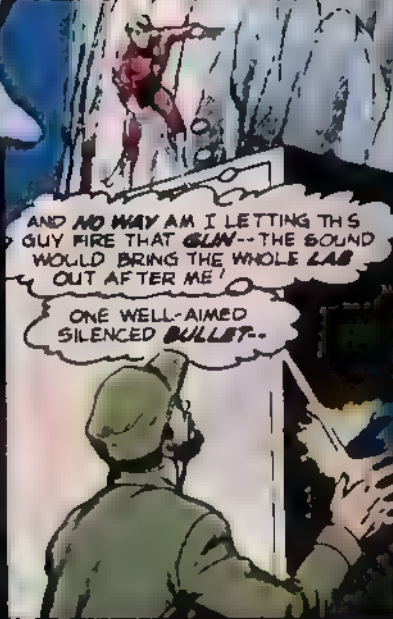
THREE METERS MORE--



--AND HE'S DOWN



SENTRY COMING OUT OF THE **STAIRWELL**. MY DUMB **LUCK**--NO WAY ANYONE COULD **SEE** ME--!



AND **NO WAY** AM I LETTING THIS GUY FIRE THAT **GLN**--THE SOUND WOULD BRING THE WHOLE **LAB** OUT AFTER ME!

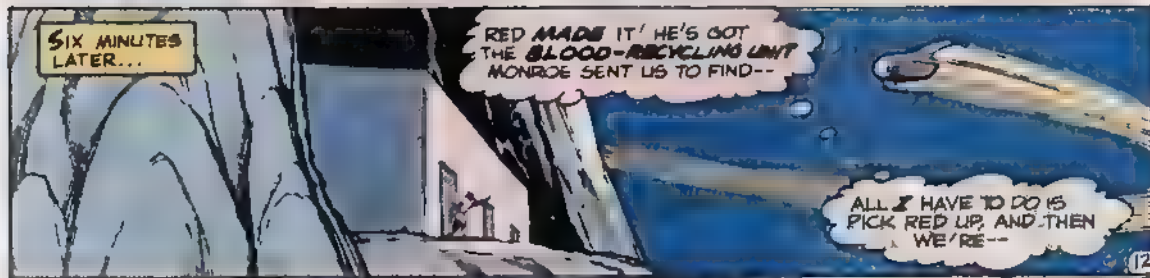
ONE WELL-AIMED **SILENCED BULLET--**



--AND I'M **HOME FREE!**

TA-TA, BORIS CATCH YOU ON MY WAY **BACK**, OL' **BUDDY**.

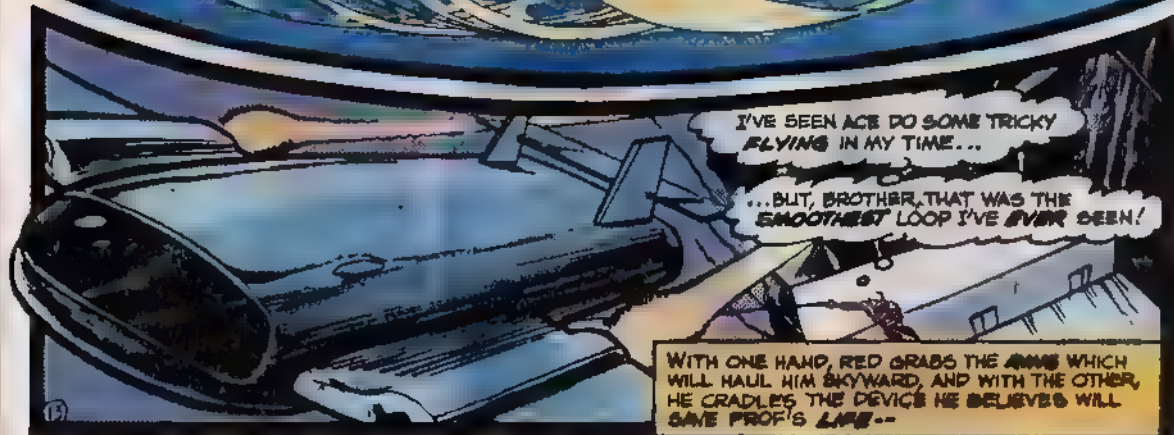
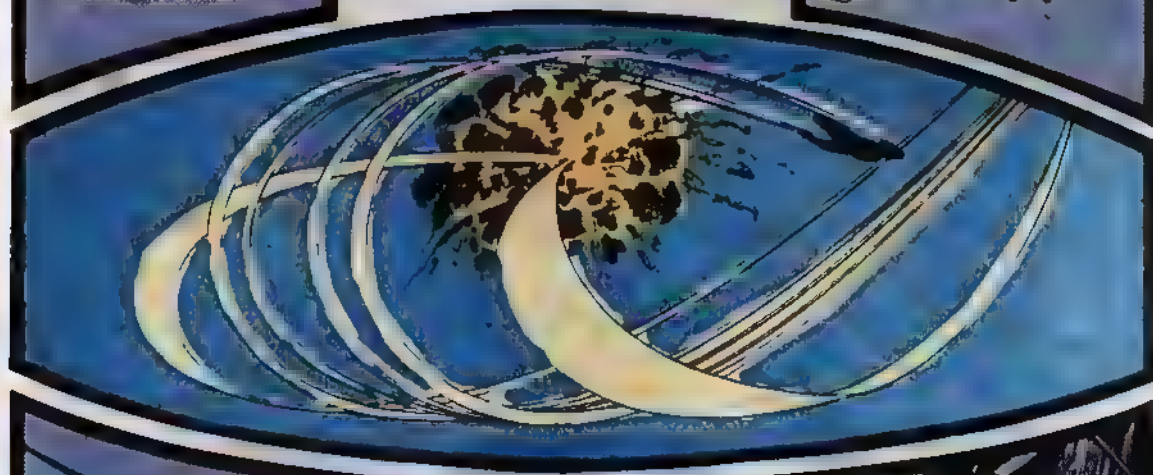
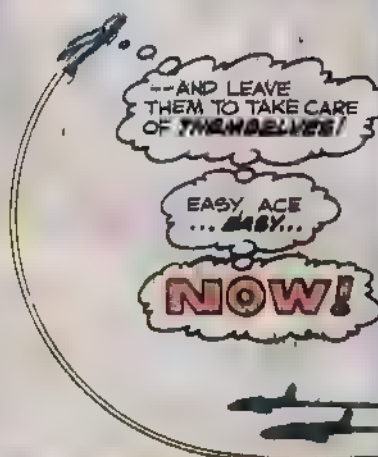
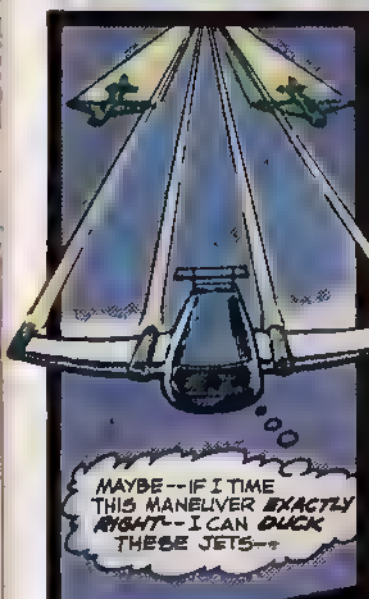
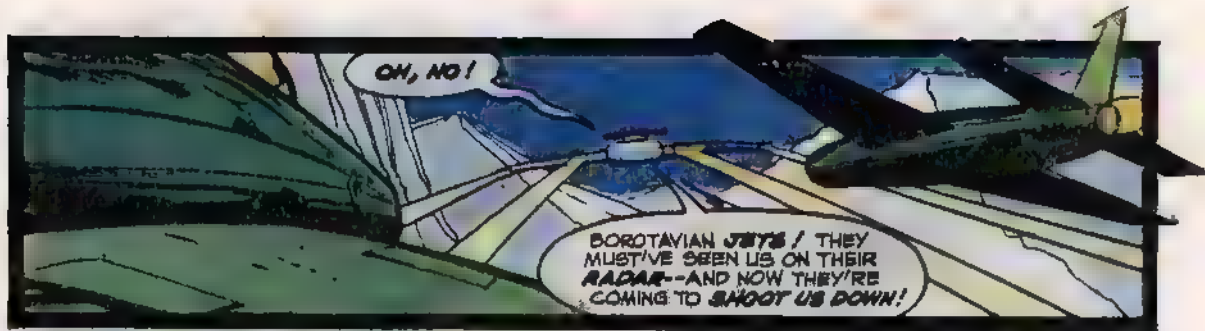
SIX MINUTES LATER...



RED MADE IT! HE'S GOT THE **BLOOD-RECYCLING UNIT** **MONROE** SENT US TO FIND--

ALL I HAVE TO DO IS PICK **RED** UP, AND THEN WE'RE--

(12)
[CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING]



--LITTLE KNOWING THAT THE MAN WHO SENT THE TWO CHALLENGERS ON THEIR MISSION IS, IN FACT, TOTALLY MAD.

AH, MR DAVIS... AT LAST YOU'RE AWAKE. THAT WAS QUITE A BUMP YOU RECEIVED, MR. DAVIS.

WHAT HAVE YOU... DONE... WITH JUNE?

ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, MR DAVIS--

--WE WERE WAITING
--FOR YOU.

THE LURKER RISES

CHAPTER 4

WHY, YOU LITTLE CREEP! I'LL BREAK YOUR ARM--I'LL--I'LL--

YOU'LL DO NOTHING OF THE SORT, MR DAVIS

I ASSURE YOU, YOUR BONDS ARE QUITE SECURE

OH, YEAH?

ANSWER ME ONE THING, MONROE, HOW DOES A DOCTOR GET HOOKED UP WITH A DEVIL CULT--

--WORSHIPPING THAT--THAT--THAT THING LOCKED IN THE CHURCH-- TELL ME NOW, "DOCTOR"?

MR DAVIS... WE ARE NOT A DEVIL CULT--

--AND AS FOR THAT 'THING'--IT IS QUITE SIMPLY A HIGHER FORM OF LIFE--A CREATURE NAMED M'NAGALA--

--WHO WAS ALMOST DESTROYED BY A SWAMP MONSTER SOME MONTHS AGO--

--YET MANAGED TO SURVIVE, CLINGING TO THE FLESH OF ONE JASON MONROE.

"YES, JASON WAS MY **COUSIN**... AND HE CAME TO ME IN MY MANHATTAN OFFICE, AND BEGGED ME TO **CURE** HIS 'SICKNESS'."

"BUT AS I WATCHED THE FUNGUS **SPREADING** OVER JASON'S BODY, I REALIZED THAT THIS WAS SOMETHING **NEW**..."

"AT FIRST, I THOUGHT IT WAS ONLY AN **INFECTION**, SIMILAR TO A **PLANTER'S WART**..."

"...SOMETHING **BEYOND** THE UNDERSTANDING OF MODERN MEDICINE..."

"FOR DAYS, I LABORED TO STOP THE FUNGUS'S **GROWTH**, BUT I SOON UNDERSTOOD THAT MY EFFORTS WERE IN **VAIN**..."

"...**REVEALING** TO ME, THAT WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO JASON WAS **GOOD**...AND **JUST**..."

"GRADUALLY, I CAME TO FEEL **ANOTHER** PRESENCE IN MY MIND...**CALMING** ME, **SOOTHING** ME..."

"M'NAGALA REQUIRED A **HOST BODY**... AND IT WAS ONLY **FAIR** THAT JASON SHOULD **PROVIDE** THE BODY..."

"...WHILE I WOULD PROVIDE MY **BRAIN**"

"TOGETHER, JASON AND I **SPREAD** THE 'INFECTION', AND DOUBTLESSLY, PROFESSOR HALEY RECEIVED HIS FUNGUS INDIRECTLY FROM JASON..."

"...JUST AS I RECEIVED IT IN A MANNER MUCH MORE **DIRECT**."

"Y-YOUR **CHEST**..."

"M'NAGALA **WELCOMES** ME INTO HIS BEING...LEAVING ME MY MIND AND **MOST** OF MY BODY...FREEING ME TO **INDOCTRINATE** OTHERS..."

"SUCH AS **YOURSELF**"

"WE MUST **LEAVE** NOW, MR. DAVIS...BUT YOU NEEDN'T **FEAR**."

"YOU **WON'T** BE ALONE...NOT FOR **LONG**."

"HE'S **CRAZY**..."

...LEAVING ME HERE
...FOR WHAT?
"INDOCTRINATION?"

THAT GUY'S GOT
MORE SCREWS
LOOSE THAN
ARNOLD PALMER'S
GOT GOLF BALLS.
HE'LL--

MUM? HEY...
SOMEONE'S IN
THE BACK OF THE
MINE SHAFT!

TENSING, ROCKY DAVIS
PEERS INTO THE DARKNESS
AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL...

...AND AS HE STARES,
SOMETHING MOVES...

...SOMETHING THAT
MIGHT ONCE HAVE
BEEN ALMAN...

...BUT IS HUMAN
NO LONGER.

DON'T KNOW WHO THAT IS--AND I'VE
GOT A REAL GUT-FEELING THAT I
DON'T WANT TO
FIND OUT!

GOTTA GET LOOSE--
HELP JUNE--AND PROH
I'VE GOTTA--I'VE
GOTTA!

EVERY MUSCLE STRAINING,
ROCKY DAVIS TRIES DESPERATELY
TO RECAPTURE THE STRENGTH
OF HIS YOUTH--

--THE STRENGTH HE SO
HUNGRIPLY NEEDS--TO
BE FREE!..

SNAP

VEINS BULGING, TENDONS
TIGHTENING, ROCKY
STRUGGLES WITH THE
FORCES INSIDE HIMSELF--

I DID IT!
I DID IT!

--AND NINE!

SCRAPE

CONCLUDED ON 3rd PAGE FOLLOWING

BARELY ABLE TO STAND, BREATH RASPING IN HIS EARS, ROCKY STAGGERS FROM THE SHAFT, DUST AND DIRT BILLOWING AROUND HIM...



DIMLY, HE SEES A FAMILIAR JET LANDING ON THE TOWN SQUARE--

--AND WITH THE **LAST** OF HIS STRENGTH, HE STUMBLES TOWARD HIS FELLOW CHALLENGERS, FRANTICALLY TRYING TO **SHOUT--**

--AND MANAGING ONLY A **WHISPER**

JUNE... THEY'VE GOT JUNE... IN THE CHURCH...

ROCKY?

URGENTLY, IN A VOICE CRACKING WITH PAIN, ROCKY TELLS WHAT HE KNOWS... AND HIS FRIENDS LISTEN...

IF WHAT ROCKY SAYS IS **TRUE--**

--WE'VE BEEN SENT ON A WILD-GOOSE CHASE--AND JUNE IS IN DEADLY DANGER!

NO OTHER WORDS NEED PASS BETWEEN THEM...

TOGETHER, THEY STRIDE TO THE CHURCH, THROW OPEN THE DOORS, AND...

MONROE! WE WANT TO TALK WITH--

DEAR LORD--! LOOK--!

RED RYAN LOOKS, AND HIS MOUTH GOES DRY...

TAKE **ONE STEP** GENTLEMEN, AND YOUR FRIEND WILL BECOME **ONE** WITH M'NAGALA.

IF YOU WISH TO SEE HER **LIVE**, YOU MUST DO AS I SAY--

--OR, BELIEVE ME, THE GIRL WILL **DIE!**

AND THOUGH THEY TRY DESPAIRINGLY TO THINK OF AN **ALTERNATIVE**, THE CHALLENGERS HAVE NO **CHOICE--** BUT TO ANGRILY **AGREE!**

TO BE CONTINUED! SIXTY DAYS FROM NOW, THE CHALLENGERS FACE A CREATURE OF CONSUMMATE EVIL WHEN THEY FIND--

SEVEN DOORWAYS & DESTINY

WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T MISS IT!

ON SALE DURING THE THIRD WEEK IN JULY



Welcome! Yes, welcome to **CHALLENGER MOUNTAIN**, home of the **Men Who Live on Borrowed Time—THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN!** We're here today to get the inside story on the man who is now lending "life" to **ACE, PROF, RED and ROCKY**—the new artist of the new **CHALLENGERS!** His name is Monsour Adel Nasserdine and he's—wait, wait, wait! Monsour Adel Nasserdine? That's not the name appearing on the credit line of this book!

Right you are, but that's artist Mike Nasser's alter-ego and this is the story of how he acquired these two (and a few other) identities:

It all began one cold October day in Detroit, Michigan, in 1956. On that particular day, Mike Nasser entered this world in the usual way. After a short, non-remembered stay of 8 months, Mike and his family moved to Lebanon for an 11-year stay.

"I didn't grow up anything like 11-year-olds in the United States," says Mike, "I didn't read comic books, for instance. They had some of them over there, I knew, who Superman was, but I had no kind of collection or burning interest. But I was interested in drawing. My brother had given me a large stack of blank paper from a printing plant and I started in copying pictures from encyclopedias."

In 1967, the war in Lebanon "had nothing to do" with the return of the Nassers to the United States. But back they came, to Mike's hometown of Detroit where he entered the public school system of the Redford High School. Losing no time in making a name for himself, Mike joined the R.O.T.C. program of the school and soon rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel, second in command of the entire Detroit Corps. At the same time, he channeled his artwork into a profitable sign-painting career after school hours.

Mike became more aware of comic books, but there was still no desire to enter the comics field. He did attend some local conventions, meeting artist Neal Adams and others, but how that meeting was to change his life, came later.

Already well-known around his school, Mike thought it would be a great idea to put his sign painting company directly to work—for himself! So, the Redford High School walls were soon peppered with campaign signs! Yes, Mike was entering the wild and woolly life of high school politics. But the signs didn't proclaim "Mike Nasser for Vice-President of the Class of '73!" No, instead Mike decided to be clever and pulled a pun of a popular song as his campaign slogan. The hand-painted signs told everyone at Redford to "Vote for 'Funky' Nasser"—and the nickname's stuck—all the way to New York City!

So, up until the end of the school year in 1973, former Arab Monsour Adel Nasserdine, a.k.a. Mike Nasser,

a.k.a. Funky Nasser was a well-established military genius, sign-painter and political master-mind. Upon graduation, The Mick Displays Sign Company was a going concern and the comic book world was only something that would be touched by Mike from the other side—as a fan!

But then a tragic chord was struck in young Funky's life. A budding romance with a fair damsel was ended, in an impulse, Funky yelled, "Okay, I'll run away to New York and draw comic books!"

Luckily for us, his threat was not empty. In November of 1975, Mike Nasser hit the Big Apple, portfolio in hand and ready to work! His first stop was at Continuity Associates, the free-lance comic and graphic arts studio headed by Dick Giordano—and Neal Adams—the very artist Mike met at the convention some years earlier. Neal started Mike out by inking the backgrounds on a job pencilled by artist Arvel Jones—who, by sheer coincidence, was the very person with whom Mike had been staying. Arvel, you see, was a fellow Detroitian!

It wasn't long after that the name Mike Nasser began showing up in some of the British editions of the competitor's magazines—and then some of their covers.

When Gerry Conway served his short stint as a DC editor, he brought Mike in to pencil the first **TALES OF THE GREAT DISASTER** back-up in **KAMANDI**. As each job was handed in, the work of Mike Nasser improved. **ISIS** followed; **THE LEGION, KOBRA, WONDER WOMAN, BLACK CANARY** and **GREEN ARROW** have all been brought to comic book "life" by Mike's magic pencil. And now we're proud to have him on the **CHALLENGERS!**

Of his new assignment, Mike says, "I think the **CHALLENGERS** are characters filled with potential! They create a reality of unknown and, therefore, a reality of no rules—we can do anything we want with them and I find that exciting!"

We agree, and we hope readers will find the adventures (and the art) of the **CHALLENGERS** as exciting as Mike (and the rest of us) want it to be.

Hey Funky, before you go—how about painting a new sign for Jenette's office...?



DOOM PATROL LIVES!

ROBOTMAN REFORMS TEAM WITH THREE NEW HEROES

(DC, New York)—The *Doom Patrol* lives again—thanks to the efforts of *Robotman*, who has rounded up three new heroes to replace the comrades he lost years ago.

Filling the shoes of the deceased *Negative Man*, *Elasti-Girl* and the *Chief*, are a trio of super-stars who have never been seen before: *Tempest*, *Celestus* and *Negative Woman*! It's action all the way as "The *Doom Patrol* Lives Forever" in *SHOWCASE #94* (which, by the way, proves that *SHOWCASE* also lives forever)! Paul Kupperberg has served up the script and Ed Davis and Joe Rubinstein will be handling the art chores on a landmark issue you dare not miss... when it goes on sale the week of May 30th!



TWO JONAH HEXES??

(The Old West)—*Jonah Hex* is a fugitive, wanted for the murders of three men—but now there's a second *Jonah* and he's out to kill the original. Who is this deadly cowboy and why would he want to impersonate a hunted man? Learn the answers in "Day of the Chameleon" by Michael Fleisher and Jose Luis Garcia Lopez. It's in *JONAH HEX #4*, on sale the week of May 30th!

SUPERMAN TACKLES DR. LIGHT

(Metropolis)—Johnny Nevada's *Midnight Show* has a unique line-up of guests scheduled: all the men who have impersonated *Superman* at one time or another. And *Dr. Light* has plans to learn which one is the real *Man of Steel*! Just what does the villain have up his luminous sleeve? Cary Bates, Kurt Schaffenberger and Tex Blaisdell will show you in "Will the Real *Superman* Please Show Up?" in *ACTION COMICS #474*, on sale the week of May 30th.

And, also in the issue, *Clark Kent* strikes it rich in "One For the Money" by Bob Toomey, Schaffenberger and Blaisdell.



DIRECT CURRENTS

ON SALE THE WEEK OF MAY 30th *DETECTIVE COMICS #471*—*Dr. Hugo Strange* returns to plague *Batman* in "The Dead Yet Live" by Steve Englehart, Marshall Rogers and Terry Austin.

GHOSTS #56—We challenge you to read this collection of true tales of the supernatural: "Case of the Spectral Sleuth"; "Triumph of the Teen-Age Phantom"; and "Night Spirits of the Orinopo!"

GREEN LANTERN #98—The Guardians of the Universe summon *Green Lantern* to Oa to solve the baffling question "How Can an Immortal Die?" by Denny O'Neil, Mike Grell and Vince Colletta.

SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER-VILLAINS #9—The *Creeper* joins the Society and the *Trickster* joins *Kid Flash* and *Captain Comet* in "Turnabout is Unfair Play" by Gerry Conway, Rich Buckler and Joe Rubinstein.

WONDER WOMAN #234—The new original *Wonder Woman* in blazing battle action to save the world from Nazi rule in a Gerry Conway/Jose Delbo/Vince Colletta collaboration.

AND ON SALE RIGHT NOW: *CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN #82*/METAL MEN #53/NEW GODS #13/RAGMAN #6/SUPER FRIENDS #8/SUPER-TEAM FAMILY #12 (*Green Lantern*, *Hawkman* and *The Atom*)/UNKNOWN SOLDIER #207/WARLORD #8



ASK THE ANSWER MAN!

Q: Has the *Phantom Stranger's* origin ever been revealed?—*Eric Greenberg*. A: No, it hasn't... and we're willing to bet he'll never let the cat out of the bag!

Q: What was the *Phantom Stranger* doing in *GREEN LANTERN #93*?—*Michael Lawler*. A: PS comes and goes as he wishes—and he's just a quiet about his GL appearance as he is about his origin!

Q: What is the status of *Phantom Stranger*, *Snapper Carr*, *Metamorpho* and *The Demon* with the *Justice League*?—*Anthony Pignataro*. A: PS is an active member (as shown in *JLA #145*); *Snapper Carr* is an honorary member; *Metamorpho* is a reserve stand-by; and *The Demon* has neither requested nor been considered for *JLA* membership!

Q: Whatever happened to *The Joker's* magazine?—*Stephen Denmark*. A: It was discontinued after #9 because of poor sales. But watch for the Clown Prince of Crime in upcoming issues of *BATMAN*! Got a question for the Answer Man? Send it to Bob Rozakis, DC COMICS, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10019.